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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

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Communism and Youth

1. The communist effort to indoctrinate Czech youth has largely been a failure. Children absorbed a great deal of communist doctrine, but as soon as they begin to have ideas of their own, at the age of 14 or 15, they quickly throw off the communist indoctrination. In source's school at Prerov (N 49-27, E 17-27), not more than three to five per cent of the high-school age children were convinced communists. In the 1954 graduating class of about 40, 17-and 18-year-old boys and girls, only one or two students were convinced communists. The proportion of convinced communists among university students and young apprentices was probably no greater than in the secondary school. She thought, though, that perhaps more of the older students had learned the value of conformity, and so had come to pretend to be convinced communists, than was true of the younger students.

2. [redacted]

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there was only one instance [illegible] student. In February 1951, a 17-year-old girl of working-class origin complained to the district secretariat of the Czechoslovak League of Youth (CSM) that a non-communist teacher, in handing out some newly issued students' records and grade books, had referred to the book as a "viehschein" (cattle certificate). The secretary of the youth organization went to the principal of the school and demanded

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that the teacher be discharged. The head of the education section of the national committee in Olomouc was also brought into the case. After an investigation, details of which are not known to source, the teacher was cleared and allowed to continue teaching at the school. The incident became known to the other students, who demonstrated their disapproval of the girl's behavior by more or less putting her in coventry for the remaining 18 months the girl was at the school. The girl was sent to the Soviet Union in October 1952 to study political science and has not returned to Prerov.

3. Though denunciations were thus quite unusual in the school, the fear of them was great enough so that both teachers and students generally were careful to avoid provocative remarks. Anti-communist sentiments were mainly expressed by the use of an ironical tone of voice when talking about the virtues of communism and the Soviet Union. The teachers and students pretended not to notice the irony in the voices. When more open remarks against the regime were made, the teacher would always insist that he had not heard them.

4. At the weekly meetings of the teachers, everyone was urged to report any behavior which could call for correction. Sometimes teachers would feel obliged to report anti-regime remarks by students lest the remarks be reported independently by someone else. 50X1 recalled that in 1951 one of the teachers had informed the meeting that a student in a social sciences class discussion of the government had openly asked, "Why do we have to talk about such stupid people?" When called to the principal, the student explained that he had been misunderstood; he had been thinking of the Slansky gang. The other students in the class testified that they had all understood the remark in this sense, so the student's explanation was accepted.

5. Membership in the CSM was actually, though not officially, compulsory and roll was taken at the CSM general meetings held during or just after school hours once or twice a month. Until 1953 only from 50 to 60% of the students had belonged to CSM, but in fall 1953 the principal promised the secretariat of CSM that all of the students would be signed up. This was apparently done. Everyone realized that the active ill-will of the CSM could cost a student his chances of admission to a university. It was thus easier to join, attend the meetings, and ignore the communist message than to refuse to take part. Membership was entirely a passive affair for almost all students. Active participation in CSM activities was not a condition of membership in school sports teams, did not affect the grades received for course work and examinations, played little or no part in assignment to brigades during vacation time, and was not a requirement for admission to the universities.

6. Every year in May and June a committee sat at each school to make recommendations on the future of the students in that year's graduating class. The members were the school principal, another principal from elsewhere who was usually chairman of the committee, the class (American-style "home room") teacher, a member of the local national committee, a member of the CSM secretariat in Prerov, and one so-called public member who was usually an employee of the trade union central URO. A statement on the student by CSM was a part of each student's file. Until 1952 this committee was fairly strict; in that year three or four students out of 40 were not recommended for advanced education on political or class grounds. In 1953 and 1954, however, all of the students who wanted to continue their studies were approved. Until 1953 the committee interviewed the students on political topics, but in 1954 the interview was dispensed with on orders from the Ministry of Education. The change

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was greeted with relief by all concerned, particularly the students, as the question period, which might last for up to an hour in difficult cases, was felt to be an especially troublesome ordeal. Source did not know why the oral examination was dropped, but supposed that the authorities felt that the written and oral entrance examinations were a sufficient barrier to undesirable elements seeking admission to the universities.

7. On the general question of admission to the university, source's information was almost entirely second-hand. She knew that the number of places open in the universities was limited, so that in some subjects there were always some students who were not admitted. In such circumstances, children of kulaks tended to be put at the bottom of the list, along with those who received low grades in the written (mainly non-political) entrance examinations. A number of students from Prerov, for example, were denied admission to medical schools in 1953 and 1954, though all had been recommended by source's school committee and though some of them at least had probably done well enough in the written examinations.

8. 50X1 hours with a fifteen minute period of political indoctrination. The students were obliged to spend this period reading and discussing news items printed in the youth paper, Mlada Fronta. There were generally joint subscriptions of one copy for every three students. The discussion and other joint activities of the class were conducted by a chairman and a class committee selected by the students themselves at the beginning of each school year. Until 1952 the nominations had been made by the CSM leadership in the school. After 1952 the matter was left to the students. CSM activists may sometimes have arranged to restrict nominations from the floor to their own number, but source thought that this was usually not necessary. The work of class leader involved so many unpleasant chores that the non-communist students preferred to let a communist fill the job. In one of the classes in 1953, however, the students selected as class leader someone whose non-communist views were well known in the school.

9. 50X1 young people were more attracted to the Organization for Cooperation with the Armed Forces (Svazarm) than to CSM. About half of the students belonged to a section of Svazarm which offered students the chance to become amateur glider pilots, radio operators, and the like, while CSM appeared to offer little besides politics. During the 1952-1953 school year, CSM sponsored a series of so-called "Dancing Wednesdays", afternoon functions at the community hall including amateur theatricals, dancing, and light refreshments. These affairs were not continued in fall 1953, however, as the students had mischievously chosen to perform parts from a number of older plays by the well-known Prague dramatic team of Voskovec and Werich, which the principal thought might be held to have an anti-communist content.

10. About 15 or 20 percent of the 50X1 money grants of from 50 to 200 crowns per month to stay in school; this money was paid directly to the parents. Children of communists received some preference in the allocation of such help which was handled by the principal and one of the teachers who acted as part-time social referent but CSM apparently did not have any direct connection with the selection of students who could receive this help. About half of the students actually applied for it.

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11. Juvenile delinquency was not much of a problem in Prerov. No students at the Eleven-Year School had been arrested or been the subject of police investigations for disorderly behavior since she came there in 1950. One girl became pregnant in 1953 by a
50X1 student at the industrial school in Prerov, but this sort of delinquency was nothing new. young apprentices in factories often behaved very rudely. She thought that most complaints of juvenile delinquency involved young people who had left school and gone to work in factories where conditions of work were very poor and morale and morals very bad. About half of the young people who finished the elementary school in Prerov at the age of about fourteen became apprentices in factories or shops. The other half was spread among the various
50X1 so-called schools of the third degree in Prerov-the eleven-year , the industrial school, the higher economic school, the agricultural school, and the pedagogical school. The long-range plan was for all students to continue their studies through the eleventh grade at one of those schools.

12. There were five or six young North Koreans, aged 16 to 18, two girls and three or four boys, studying at the industrial school in Prerov. They came there in 1952 or 1953 and were taking a four-year course. Source did not know anyone who knew them, but she heard one of the students give a talk in Czech on geography at the Eleven-Year School gymnasium. The North Koreans apparently associated very little with the Czechs in the town. There were no Chinese in Prerov.

The Teaching Profession

13. Sixteen of the
50X1 but not more than four of these were convinced communists. Twenty of the 25 had entered the teaching profession before 1948. Only one of the five post-1948 teachers was a Party member. To the best of source's knowledge, none of the persons teaching at Prerov before 1948 had been arrested or thrown out of the profession, though several had transferred to other schools. The Czech school system was thus still mainly staffed with, though not necessarily directed by, persons already in the profession before the communist seizure of power. Perhaps half of the old teachers compromised with the regime to the extent of accepting Party membership, but this had little effect on their innermost convictions. With the exception of the very few convinced communists, there was not any important difference in the teaching behavior of the Party and the non-Party teachers. Both gave only lip service to the regime. Since none
50X1 of the there seemed to be a tacit understanding that no one would make trouble for the students or the fellow teachers if it could be avoided. At the weekly teachers' meeting on Wednesday afternoons, for example, the teachers took turns reading the political address for that week. The fifteen-minute or so discussion period following the reading, say, of some editorials of that week's issues of Rude Pravo was an entirely lifeless affair. Simple questions were asked and simple answers were given. At the end, the principal invariably praised the teacher who had read that day's lesson. The meeting then passed on to other business, to Ministry of Education announcements about vacation periods, about changes in curricula, and so on. A part of the meeting was given over to discussion of the students' progress and problems - whether a good basketball player who did poorly in his studies should be allowed to stay on the school team and the like. There, too, troublesome political considerations were usually avoided where possible. The teachers generally tried to

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protect the students by glossing over or finding excuses for such political shortcomings of the students as might come up for discussion at the teachers' meetings.

14. Source conceded that perhaps conditions were not so satisfactory in other schools, but it was her general impression that communism had had much less success in the schools than anxious adults feared. She supposed that the authorities were aware of this but could do nothing about it. The shortage of trained personnel in all fields was so great that the communists could not dispense with the existing staffs of teachers without having to close the schools. Nevertheless, teaching standards were lower than in 1948. The textbooks were often translations of Soviet texts which, in the sciences, were too heavily loaded with facts. The teachers had to follow such texts literally, even though the material was too much for the students to absorb in the time alloted. The mania for planning also hurt teaching standards. The yearly plan for the school called for the passing of all students to the next higher grade, even though it could obviously be expected that some students would not do good enough work to merit passing grades. In 1954, to be sure, one particularly stupid student was finally held over for another year, but this was regarded as a most exceptional necessity. New teachers entering the profession are also less well trained than in the past. Young people of eighteen who failed to gain admittance to the university were assigned to primary school teaching, with the requirement that later on they take follow-up courses in vacation time. Persons training to be high school teachers were obliged to begin teaching after three years at the teachers' colleges, even though they might not yet have finished all of their courses or taken their degrees.

15. [redacted] had held closed meetings
50X1 with the school committee of CSM, at which the student committee members were permitted to discuss the work of their teachers, the grades they gave, and so on. After 1952, these meetings were dropped, apparently on orders from the Ministry of Education. The Ministry's ruling was supposedly taken to strengthen the authority of the teachers. The Czech equivalent of the Parent-Teacher Association (Sdruzeni rodicu a pratel skoly - SRPS)held
50X1 meetings once a month during the school season. [redacted] nearly all of the parents of the children in the primary school came to these meetings, about half of the parents of children from 11 to 14 years, and about a quarter of the parents of the 14 to 17 year group. The meetings usually avoided political subjects, and
50X1 were confined to discussions of school activities,plans for school ski outings in the winter vacation, and the like. [redacted] she never heard any parents complain about the courses of instruction the children were receiving, but that large turn-outs of parents wishing to meet the teachers perhaps was caused by the desire of the parents to know that the children were in reasonably good hands.

16. The only occasion when politics entered the meetings was when the parent-teacher meeting would be held in conjunction with a meeting of the Czechoslovak-Soviet Friendship Society. Then one of the teachers might talk on some subject such as the meaning of friendship with the Soviet Union. The Friendship Society meetings were held once a month. All teachers were required to belong. The Society's activities were not especially troublesome to the teachers, as the meetings of the teachers' section of the Society were usually staged simultaneously with one of the weekly teachers' pedagogical meetings on a weekday afternoon.

17. 50X1 French and English. As Russian was a compulsory subject, so much of her time was used up with that language that she gave no instruction in English or French. The students were required to study one foreign language besides Russian, either French, German, or English. In September 1953 source started to teach a class in English to the ninth grade as a voluntary subject after two o'clock in the afternoon. In October, however, the regional national committee in Olomouc ordered the class discontinued on the grounds that, as the children were simultaneously starting to study German, it was too difficult to try to learn two new foreign languages at the same time. In effect, therefore, no English or French was taught them though both languages remained on the list of permitted subjects. The young people learned Russian fairly well though they took no interest in it, and for fun often pretended not to know any better than to speak Russian by using Czech words with Russian endings.

18. Language teachers in Prerov were compulsorily organized in an Institute of Modern Languages. The 50 members of the Slavonic section met one afternoon a week for two hours to discuss teaching methods, to listen from the back of the room to teachers giving their lessons, and to hear lectures.

19. The money for the schools of the third degree (classes 9-11) came from the budgets of the regional national committee (KNV), of the second degree (classes 6-8) from the district national committee (ONV) and of the first degree (classes 1-5) from the municipal national committee (MNV).

Religion

20. 50X1 young people went to church on Sundays than in the past. Church-going was regarded as a relatively safe way of demonstrating one's anti-communism, so that even people who were not particularly religious now sometimes went to church in a spirit 50X1 of anti-communist solidarity. that church-going had increased because religious training within the family circle was now more widespread than hitherto.

21. 50X1 organizational questions. She had the impression that there had been no relaxation in state controls on religion, though she had also not noticed any increase in state pressure on the churches in the last year or two. She felt that the ostensible acquiescence in government controls on religion was only apparent and that the people remained as devoted to religion as ever.

22. No religious instruction was given at the Eleven-Year Secondary School (ages 14 to 17). She did not know if such instruction was allowed for the lower grades, but thought perhaps it might have been as mothers sometimes came to the Eleven-Year School at the opening of the school year to ask that their children be allowed to receive religious instruction at the school. The mothers were always received by the principal individually, never in groups, and tactfully told that their request could not be granted.

23. The rules for the younger children were evidently more lenient, as source recalled from a discussion during 1953-1954 of a girl in the eighth grade (last year of the primary school) who was an Adventist and for that reason never attended classes on Saturday. This girl had been allowed to prepare her Saturday lessons at home on Sundays.

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She was a very intelligent child, and so had no trouble keeping up with her classmates. In the teachers' meeting where her case was discussed, the principal explained that the standing rules of the Ministry of Education obliged the elementary school to permit the child to stay away from her studies on Saturdays, but that in the Eleven-Year School such absences would not be allowed. The child was accepted for admission to the Eleven-Year School, but source left Czechoslovakia too soon to know whether the girl or the school ultimately gave way.

24. On religious holidays which did not coincide with state holidays children were not excused from class to attend church, but it frequently happened that on such days four or five of the 40 children in the class stayed away from school and reported the next day with signed excuses from their parents that they had been ill that day. These four or five were usually from peasant families living some distance outside the town.

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themselves. She said that even the teachers who were not personally believers usually tried to protect students who were criticized for attending church. At the committee meetings held in June to pass on the records of the students leaving the school, the teachers could explain that the one girl really went to church because she liked to sing in the choir, another went to avoid trouble with her old mother, and so on. Though these explanations were usually accepted and, as we have seen, such children were recommended for admission to the universities, it must be added that the fact of church attendance was undoubtedly harmful to the children's careers; the authorities always gave the non-church-goer priority over the church-goer. She thought that perhaps half of the teachers attended church services fairly frequently.

Leaflets

26. In June or July 1954, while walking on a country road on the outskirts of Uhersky Brod in eastern Moravia, source picked up an anti-communist leaflet in the Czech language. It urged the peasants to hold back grain for their own needs and not to turn over the full amounts demanded by the state collecting agency. The leaflet also reminded its readers not to forget the ten points. She read the leaflet and gave it to the manager of the resort hotel near Uhersky Brod where her husband worked, for passing on to the police. This was the only anti-communist leaflet source ever saw. She disposed of it as above because she was afraid someone might have seen her pick it up on the road. Some of her students had seen and told her of the "Hunger Crowns" they had found in Prerov. She was certain that everybody in the country knew of the leaflets and had seen a leaflet at one time or another.

27. She had no knowledge on the actions taken by the authorities to prevent circulation of the leaflets. She assumed that only the police looked for the leaflets. There was no official discussion of the leaflets in the school and no effort to organize parties of children to search for the leaflets.

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28. Most people who found leaflets read them, showed them to intimate friends, and then turned them over to the local police. She never heard of anybody mailing the leaflets to the communist authorities or putting a leaflet in the balloting boxes. She is certain, however, that many people wrote the number ten on the ballots. She herself did this, after first carefully crossing off all of the names of the candidates. She did this in accordance with the advice heard on the political broadcasts of Radio Free Europe. The gossip in Czechoslovakia was that so many people had marked their ballots in this way that the authorities felt obliged to count as valid even those ballots carrying the number ten when the voters had neglected to cross out all of the names of all the candidates.

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29. of persons possessing the printed material but she took it for granted that there had been such cases and supposed that a person arrested on such a charge would receive approximately a six months sentence.

30. The leaflets were generally welcomed by all segments of society. Source did not think there were any differences on this subject in the opinions of any of the occupational or age groups in the population. The ten demands were very popular. She never heard any criticism of their formulation. The figure "ten" has become a popular symbol of opposition to the regime but she never heard of its use elsewhere than in the election booth.

Attitude Toward the Government's Promises of a Better Future

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31. now better. Price reductions had generally been confined to the lowest-quality items only. She was sure that conditions would never improve under the present government because it would continue to export everything possible to the Soviet Union.

32. Political pressure was now lighter than a year or two ago. She thought that the pressure had been taken off a bit to pacify people before the spring 1954 elections, but that sooner or later a harder line would be resumed. She added, however, that people felt a bit freer also because, in her opinion, nearly everyone believed that time and experience had shown that communism was an economic and political failure. She put particular importance on the growing disillusionment of the working class with communism, as shown by the strikes of June 1953. Hardly anyone, even members of the Party, believed any longer that communism was succeeding in winning any converts in Czechoslovakia or was meeting the people's economic needs. Consequently, openly because they felt that the hold of the Party was weakening.

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Radio Listening

33. Source listened to BBC news broadcasts in the Czech language nearly every day at 1845 hours Czech time. She liked news broadcasts best, though she also praised the variety of items on VOA, including the humorous little news items never heard on BBC. VOA was hardest to receive in her experience. There was gossip that a jamming station had been set up in Prerov in 1953.

34. From 1951 to 1954 she sometimes listened to broadcasts in the company of three or four 17-year-old girl students who frequently came to visit her in the late afternoon after school. She warned the students not to tell anyone what they had done, but she thought that in fact the word had quickly gone about that she was anti-communist. She recalled that on the following day she felt from the glowing eyes of the great majority of her students that nearly all of them knew of what she had done and loved her for thus having proved that at heart she shared their detestation of communism.

35. Many students listened to the American Army station in Germany (AFN) because they liked the jazz. These broadcasts were not jammed in Czechoslovakia.

Views on Czech Exiles and Escapees

36. 50X1 activities of the Czech exiles but thought they were not doing their work well enough. They hoped and expected that the exiles and the diplomats of the free world would devise some means of forcing the Soviets to withdraw from the satellite countries. Peroutka was well spoken of, but people did not care much for Dr. Zenkl. The general view was that the latter had not taken an active enough anti-communist role in 1948, and was now too old to be able to do much more.

37. 50X1 that escapees received help from the American Government, but had no details on the President's Escapee Program. She said that practically everyone in Czechoslovakia agreed that, regardless of what communist newspapers said, conditions in the displaced persons camps were probably better than conditions in Czechoslovakia itself.

Reactions to the American Offer of Flood Relief

38. 50X1 been made to East Germany, that the East German authorities had first rejected the offer, and that they had finally accepted it under orders from Moscow. She thought that the offer was a good idea. She was certain that conditions were so poor everywhere in eastern Europe that aid would be gratefully received by everyone. She explained her lack of knowledge of the food offers to Czechoslovakia and Hungary by saying that during the six weeks prior to her escape in mid-August she had been travelling, and visiting relatives, and so was not able to keep up with the news very well.

Attitudes toward the United States

39. People still had hope in the United States and saw America as the source of their rescue. They were impatient that this rescue was taking so long, but many of them reasoned that, just as America didn't enter the first and second World Wars until late in the day, so America would somehow, in the darkest moment, intervene to save the day. Communist propaganda had no success in alienating good will toward the United States, as nobody was willing to believe anything he heard from a communist source. Communist propaganda about American help to Germany had also been without influence. People placed their hopes in the idea of a federal Europe. In a federal framework they would have no objection to close cooperation with the Germans. An anti-communist German was more popular than a communist Czech. The fear of a rearmed Germany is and will remain a dead issue so long as the claims of the Sudeten Germans in West Germany do not receive any more official support than they have to date from Bonn or Washington.

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Miscellaneous

40. 50X1 [redacted] was some deliberate sabotage by anti-communist elements, but could cite only one example she had heard of. That was a rumor that in 1952 or 1953 a train carrying chemicals or petroleum to the Soviet Union had been held up at the Prerov railway station for several days because some unknown saboteur had in some way blocked the track in the station or near Prerov.

41. She did not believe that there was any corruption in the Ministry of Education or in the schools generally. She also never heard of any instances of deliberate neglect of duty by members of the police.

42. She did not believe the charges against Slansky, and she also did not credit any of the reports in the press about espionage agents sent to Czechoslovakia by the Americans. The accounts about the above had been released by the communist authorities and publicized in the communist press and radio. This was enough to make source and most Czechs believe that such reports were very probably not true.

43. 50X1 [redacted] of the prize-winning Czech film "The Imperial Baker"(Cisaruv pekar), one of the characters is heard to say; "Dobrou noc a pevnou nadeji " (Good night and solid hope). When source heard this in the motion picture, she at once recognized it as a phrase used by Bruce Lockhart in concluding his broadcasts from London. She said that everyone in the audience drew his breath in, exchanged glances with his neighbor, and smiled to himself with satisfaction. The film was apparently directed or written by Werich, the dramatist, and the Czechs in the audience assumed that Werich was responsible for inserting this anti-communist slogan into the film.

44. 50X1 [redacted] seven novels in the Lanny Budd series of Upton Sinclair. She said that the books were very popular. For a time they were officially promoted by the communists, but it was believed that later volumes in the series would not be translated and were banned because the later stages of Lanny Budd's career had disappointed the communists' expectations. People in Czechoslovakia believe that the recent official revival of Capek is caused by the fact that the Russians had translated some of Capek's books, and so made it permissable for the Czech communists to read him.

45. There was no interest in Soviet literature. Most people wanted to read Czech classics or translations of Western books, but nineteenth-century Russian classics were sometimes read by people who could not find the Czech or Western books they wanted. Banned books circulated quite widely among intimate friends.